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**SPECIAL WARNING TOPIC
FOR THE DCI**

13 July 1988

IRAN/SAUDI ARABIA: Trouble Brewing During Hajj

Prepared by NIO/Warning and Staff

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SPECIAL WARNING TOPIC**IRAN/SAUDI ARABIA: Trouble Brewing During Hajj**

Iranian-instigated violence almost certainly will take place during the annual Hajj to Mecca and Medina beginning tomorrow. The violence will have strong anti-US overtones, and Saudi security forces are likely to have difficulty in identifying and containing the Iranian-sponsored groups.

Pilgrims from Iran have conducted political demonstrations in Mecca and Medina every year since the Iranian revolution in 1979, and last year incited rioting that led to 400 deaths, including approximately 275 Iranian nationals. This year, in protest of Saudi Arabia's decision to permit no more than 50,000 Iranian pilgrims to enter Saudi Arabia, Tehran asserted that no Iranians would make the Hajj.

Meanwhile, Iran, which has vowed to avenge the deaths of Iranians killed last year, has been recruiting, training and funding Muslim pilgrims in as many as 23 countries with the objective of ensuring that they distribute inflammatory pamphlets and incite political demonstrations during the Hajj. Tehran,

moreover, reportedly has arranged to pay the travel and "operational" expenses for select attendees to arrive in groups of 50 or 100 at the Hajj, sometimes with an Iranian leader.

Because these Iranian-sponsored groups will arrive in Saudi Arabia among hundreds of flights from many countries, they will be more difficult to identify and to control than discrete groups of Iranian travelers in past years. Saudi officials have enhanced security measures to deal with the threat.

Nonetheless, Riyadh will not be able to identify all the radical elements entering the country or necessarily prevent them from instigating violence or committing acts of sabotage or terrorism, given the fact that over a million Muslims will be arriving from abroad to visit the holy sites.

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